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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/069,294	06/12/2002	Alessandro Godi	2503-1004	8074
466	7590	06/22/2004	EXAMINER	
YOUNG & THOMPSON			GREEN, CHRISTY MARIE	
745 SOUTH 23RD STREET 2ND FLOOR			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
ARLINGTON, VA 22202			3635	

DATE MAILED: 06/22/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/069,294	GODI ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Christy M Green	3635

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 June 2002.
 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-9 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-9 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 12 June 2002 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>6/10/04</u> .	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

This is a first office action for serial number 10/069294, entitled Multi-layer Slab product made of stone Granulates and Relative Manufacturing Process, filed on June 12, 2002.

Drawings

The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the method steps within the claims must be shown, it is unclear how the process for preparation and the vibro-compression step must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet, and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of

any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(4) because reference character "3" has been used to designate both surface layers and agglomerated stone; and reference character "2" has been used to designate both expanded clay, intermediate layer and supports. Corrected drawing sheets are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Objections

Claims 6-8 are objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c), as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. Applicant is required to cancel the claim(s), or amend the claim(s) to place the claim(s) in proper dependent form, or rewrite the claim(s) in independent form. Within claims 6-8, it states a process for the preparation of a multi-layer composite slab product, with method steps, according to claim 1, however, claim 1 is drawn to just the multi-layer composite slab product, and not to any method steps.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claim 9 provides for the use of a product, but, since the claim does not set forth any steps involved in the method/process, it is unclear what method/process applicant is intending to encompass. A claim is indefinite where it merely recites a use without any active, positive steps delimiting how this use is actually practiced.

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed recitation of a use, without setting forth any steps involved in the process, results in an improper definition of a process, i.e., results in a claim which is not a proper process claim under 35 U.S.C. 101. See for example *Ex parte Dunki*, 153 USPQ 678 (Bd.App. 1967) and *Clinical Products, Ltd. v. Brenner*, 255 F. Supp. 131, 149 USPQ 475 (D.D.C. 1966).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Toncelli, US patent # 4,909,974.

Toncelli discloses the claimed invention multi-layer composite slab product (column 1, lines 7-8) comprising at least one support layer consisting of expanded

material agglomerate (Abstract, lines 1-4) and a binding agent (column 1, lines 19-20), and a surface layer (interpreted to be the top of the block) consisting of stone material agglomerate and a binding agent, characterized in that the at least one support layer (new dose of mixture - column 3, lines 60-61) is a pre-cast support layer and in that it is sandwiched between two of the surface layers by vibro-compression in a single step (column 3, lines 7-10); a lateral edge (inherently the block is going to have a lateral edge since it is in the shape of a block) consisting of agglomerate of the same stone material and binding agent of the surface layers (inherently consisting of the same material since the mixture of material is previously prepared - column 1, lines 51-57 and conveyed to the distributor - column 1, lines 53-55); a plurality of support elements (interpreted to be stone pieces) of expanded material agglomerate and binding agent, immersed in the stone material agglomerate and binding agent (abstract, lines 1-4); the layer of stone material (column 1, lines 40-42 and lines 53-57) is obtained by vibro-compression (column 3, lines 7-10), optionally under vacuum (column 1, lines 20-21), of marble powder (column 1, lines 17-19) or chips bound with polyester resin (column 1, lines 19-20); the pre-cast support layer is obtained by vibro-compression (column 3, lines 7-10) under vacuum of granules of expanded clay bound with polyester resin (column 1, lines 17-20).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the

invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 6-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Toncelli.

Toncelli discloses the claimed invention as stated above in claim 1, including a process for the preparation of a multi-layer composite slab product comprising the steps of distribution of a stone material agglomerate together with a binding agent in a mold (6) or on a molding belt (1 or 7) to form a first, lower layer of the product (column 1, lines 58-68), positioning on the first layer of at least one pre-cast support (column 2, lines 1-3), distribution of a further stone material agglomerate together with a binding agent on pre-cast layer (column 2, lines 60-66), vibro-compression in a single step, of the stone material agglomerates and binding agent and the pre-cast support (column 3, lines 7-10), hardening of the mixture (column 3, lines 11-12), surface and perimeter finishing of the mold product, as desired (column 1, lines 12-14).

Toncelli does not disclose the step of hardening the mixture via thermal reaction, and the use of the product for the manufacture of floorings, internal walling and external cladding of residential and public buildings, and of furniture components. In regards to the hardening step via thermal reaction, although Toncelli states that the mixture is hardened by relative setting, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made that a thermal reaction may include the means of just allowing the mixture to harden by a thermal reaction between the actual mixture itself and the outside temperature, which ultimately causes the mixture to dry or

harden, there is some type of thermal reaction taking place in order for the mixture to harden.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Christy M Green whose telephone number is 703-308-9693. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:00-4:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Carl Friedman can be reached on 703-308-0839. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Christy Green
Patent Examiner
June 10, 2004